

# HEALTH

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## FDA and EPA Announce the Revised Consumer Advisory on Methylmercury in Fish

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced their joint consumer advisory on methylmercury in fish and shellfish for reducing the exposure to high levels of mercury in women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children. This unifies advice from both FDA and EPA and supercedes FDA's and EPA's 2001 advisories.

The FDA and EPA want to emphasize the benefits of eating fish. Consumers should know that fish and shellfish can be important parts of a healthy and balanced diet. They are good sources of high quality protein and other essential nutrients; however, as a matter of prudence, women might wish to modify the amount and type of fish they consume if they are planning to become pregnant, pregnant, nursing, or feeding a young child. By following these three recommendations for selecting and eating fish or shellfish, women will receive the benefits of eating fish and shellfish and be confident that they have reduced their exposure to the harmful effects of mercury.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.
2. Eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury.
  - Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, Pollock, and catfish.
  - Another commonly eaten fish, albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to six ounces (one average meal) of albacore tuna per week.
3. Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in your local lakes, rivers and coastal areas. If no advice is available, eat up to six ounces (one average meal) per week of fish you catch from local waters, but don't consume any other fish during that week.

Follow these same recommendations when feeding fish and shellfish to your young child, but serve smaller portions.

As part of announcing the revised consumer advisory, FDA and EPA plan to launch a comprehensive outreach and educational campaign. Additional information can be found at: [www.cfsan.fda.gov](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov) or the EPA website at [www.epa.gov/ost/fish](http://www.epa.gov/ost/fish).

